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RUYNAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 2240  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 4665  
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 1302  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 3018  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 5836  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8056  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1784  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4117  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 5161  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

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STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,  
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;  
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;  
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;  
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;  
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - MIDDLE EAST PEACE

LEAD STORIES: Most Thursday morning papers front-paged reports from Islamabad concerning a statement made Wednesday by a Taliban spokesman that the group has killed one of the 23 South Korean hostages.

11. "Stepped up Diplomacy for Middle East Peace"  
Jerusalem correspondent Mina Mitsui of the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri wrote (7/26): "Egyptian Foreign Minister Gheit and Jordanian Foreign Minister al-Khatib visited Jerusalem for talks with Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and Israeli Foreign Minister Livni. During their meetings, the Egyptian and Jordanian foreign ministers asked the senior Israeli government officials to accept the 'comprehensive Middle East peace plan' advocated by the Arab League. At a time when Middle East diplomacy is becoming more active, the Arab League, which has long viewed Israel as an enemy, is for the first time engaging in direct talks with the Jewish state. However, as governance of the Palestinian territories has been split [between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas], significant obstacles still stand in the way of resuming peace talks.... The Israeli, Jordanian, and Egyptian foreign ministers appear to have discussed President Bush's proposal for an international conference on Middle East peace. For the Bush administration, bogged down in Iraq, the move by moderate Arab states to support Palestinian President Abbas has been welcome news. Secretary of State Rice plans to visit the region at the end of this month in a bid to open the way toward a resumption of Middle East peace talks."

